

Coins

How valuable is a rotated reverse?

By Roger Boye

HERE ARE answers to some of the questions received from Arts & Fun readers the last few weeks.

Q.—I have what I believe to be a rare Indian cent minted in 1863. On every United States coin I collect, the reverse side always is upside down. My coin shows the reverse side right-side-up. Do you think I might have the only Indian cent ever minted this way?

D. D., Chicago.

A.—Assuming your coin is genuine, the rotated reverse was caused by an error in the minting process. Such errors are not common, tho your cent is not unique.

In "Major Variety and Od-

dity Guide of U. S. Coins," Frank G. Spadone says this about rotated reverses: "If you hold a coin between your fingers upright and slowly turn it around, you will note the obverse-reverse designs are upside down from each other. This is normal. However some coins have been found to have both sides upright, or one design rotated from 5 to 360 degrees."

The rotation was caused by dies that were loose when the coin was minted. It is difficult to estimate the value of your coin, but to a collector of coin errors it would certainly be worth more than the \$5 selling price for a "normal" 1863 Indian cent in fine condition.

Q.—I have an 1883 U. S. coin, but have no idea of its denomination, much less its value. It is gold with 13 stars around the liberty head on the front side. The other side has a "V" and a wreath about it, the words "United States of America" and the words "e pluribus unum."

D. G., Chicago.

A.—You have an 1883 nickel, the so-called "no cents" variety, which sells for around \$3 in fine condition.

Your coin was gold plated by someone in the late 1800s who then tried to pass it off as a \$5 gold piece. Many people did this to the 1883 nickel. The design and size of this 1883 "liberty" nickel, and an 1883 \$5 gold piece look roughly the same to a

casual observer.

Later in 1883 the government added the words "five cents" to the liberty nickel in an attempt to solve the gold-plating problem.

Q.—I have a pack of 90 consecutively numbered uncirculated \$1 silver certificates series 1957. What is your opinion as to their value!

G. P. Chicago.

A.—Uncirculated 1957 series silver certificates sell for from \$2 to \$2.50 in Chicago area coin shops. A dealer might pay as much as \$1.30 for an uncirculated specimen, assuming the dealer is low on stock. In addition to the values for the individual bills, your pack of 90 probably would be worth an additional small premium.